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Thousands Get Lie Tests in U.S. Agencies

United Press International

The Federal Government has been giving lie detector tests to thousands of its employees, congressional investigators reported yesterday.

In a staff study, the House Government Information Subcommittee has discovered that Federal agencies own hundreds of polygraphs—the technical name for lie detector machines—and use them frequently.

There is an honest difference of opinion among experts as to their effectiveness.

The study was ordered by the Information Subcommittee at the request of Rep. Cornelius Gallagher (D-N.J.). He took an interest after a complaint by one of his constituents.

Figures Given

In response to questions on the progress of the eight-month investigation, Gallagher gave the UPI these "preliminary" figures:

- During the fiscal year ended June, 1963, the Government carried out 23,122 lie detector tests.

- The government owns 525 polygraphs, for which it paid \$444,000.

- The Army, with 216, easily leads in ownership. Then comes the Navy with 86, the Air Force, 72, and the FBI, 48.

- There are 656 "author-

ized polygraph operators" in the government.

- Of the 24 agencies that permit use of lie detectors, only seven have formal regulations governing their use.

The figures do not reflect use and ownership of lie detectors by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

It may be, however, that the CIA is the most prolific user of lie detectors. The agency stated that all of its prospective employees are "afforded" lie detector tests.

Given to Enlistees

The Army in fiscal 1963 administered 12,494 polygraph tests, more than half the total in the government. Of that figure, 3,494 were given to Cuban refugees seeking to enlist in the U.S. Army.

Most frequently reported purpose for use of lie detectors involves security matters. Other reasons include criminal investigations and matters touching on employee "misconduct" (infractions not considered criminal violations). Besides the CIA, the National Security Agency uses the polygraph for personnel screening.

Gallagher thinks it noteworthy that the FBI—"which has the most skilled operators"—does not use the machine for personnel screening.

Gallagher indicated he was deeply disturbed by the findings of the subcommittee staff, particularly on two points: the lack of uniform and carefully set down "ground rules" throughout the Government for protection of the individual being tested, and the lack of "rigid qualifications" for operators.